



MARYLAND HEALTH CARE COMMISSION

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MHCC 10-008

VIRTUAL COMPARE©- AN INFORMATION ONLY WEB PORTAL FOR COMPARISON OF HEALTH BENEFITS AND COST FOR THE SMALL GROUP MARKET

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

QUESTION

As one of the minimum requirements, the RFP states, "The contractor must have at least five years of experience generating health insurance information that details benefits, limitations, cost sharing, and premiums offered by multiple carriers." Does this requirement exclude offerors that have fewer than five years of experience, or offerors that do not have specific experience in "generating health insurance information that details benefits, limitations, cost sharing, and premiums offered by multiple carriers"?

RESPONSE

Yes.

QUESTION

Is Maryland taking other steps to position itself for an easy transition to the federal Connector legislation (e.g. individual AND small group subsidies)? How are you planning on utilizing the infrastructure from this project to accomplish that transition?

RESPONSE

We are sensitive to the discussions in Washington and considering options for optimal response. Virtual Compare will be utilized conceptually.

QUESTION

Is the funding of this capability only for the 2010 budget year or is it available through the contract duration? Are there other planned sources of revenue for the Maryland Health Insurance Partnership that are intended to fund the long-term operation of Virtual Compare?

RESPONSE

There is funding for maintenance and minor modifications after 2010. The operation of Virtual Compare is funded via agreement between the vendor and the carriers.

QUESTION

Please clarify the timing of when the application is expected to be in production? Date ranges seem to be dependent on “contract execution” and “work plan”. When is the work plan scheduled to be approved?

RESPONSE

The goal is to have Virtual Compare operational within 6 months of approval of the work Plan. The work plan will be approved as soon as it is deemed acceptable. Work can commence immediately after that.

QUESTION

Can you clarify other third party system or services providers who are already under contract to execute services under SB637 and the Maryland Health Insurance Partnership?

RESPONSE

We do not have contracts with any vendors related to SB637 or the Partnership at this time.

QUESTION

What is MHCC’s anticipated contract award date?

RESPONSE

February, 2010.

QUESTION

What is the State’s preferred process for requesting competitors’ bids under the Access to Public Records Act?

RESPONSE

Requestors of public information should follow the guidance from the Office of the Attorney General outlined here: <http://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/ChapterIV.pdf>

QUESTION

Part II of the RFP does not specify where in the Technical Proposal the requested information should be inserted. Please advise.

RESPONSE

Per the RFP - such functionality may be addressed in the submitted proposal but must be identified in bold as a value added service and identified as separately priced from the overall budget in the cost of the proposal.”

It would appear that a prudent person would comply with the RFP by placing such information in the section where it has applicability.

QUESTION

Item 4.9.4 requires that we name key personnel. If we are unable to determine key personnel within the timeframes of the procurement process, may we agree to the requirements of the position(s) and agree to allow MHCC final approval of personnel prior to hiring?

RESPONSE

No.

QUESTION

It is our understanding that we have permission to mark certain information confidential. What is MHCC's preference on how to mark confidential information?

RESPONSE

On a separate page(s) at the front of the technical proposal boldly marked "Confidential Material." Identify the section and provide rationale per the Attorney General PIA (Public Information Act) manual that gives guidance on the various exceptions to the PIA's disclosure requirement for public records, including exceptions for confidential commercial or financial information.

<http://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/ChapterIII.pdf>

QUESTION

Does the State consider a TPA license sufficient for licensing to conduct business in the state?

RESPONSE

The language does not preclude an out of state firm from successfully bidding, however, all vendors doing business with the state of Maryland must comply with all the requirements stated in the RFP.

QUESTION

This contract is labeled as a "Firm Fixed Price Contract". How flexible is the contract to accommodate add-ons and other functionality requirements mandated by Health Insurance Reform legislation? This would need to be addressed well before the go-live date currently slated for 2013. Please add some clarity to these potential provisions.

RESPONSE

The RFP is for an information only web portal. Should the functionality of Virtual Compare be usurped by federal reform, it will be addressed appropriately.

QUESTION

May we outline exceptions to the contract provided?

RESPONSE

Yes.

QUESTION

If we may outline exceptions to the contract, how would MHCC like to have those exceptions submitted?

RESPONSE

On a separate page(s), at the front of the technical proposal boldly headed "Exceptions." Please note that exceptions may result in a proposal being deemed non-responsive.

QUESTION

May we redline the contract provided?

RESPONSE

The format for indicating desired changes to the contract language is flexible but all proposed changes must be made on a separate page(s) at the front of the technical proposal boldly headed "Exceptions." Please note that exceptions to the contract in any format may result in a proposal being deemed non-responsive.

QUESTION

Would MHCC consider using our contract?

RESPONSE

No.

QUESTION

What is MHCC's interpretation of the cited law? What information does MHCC consider acceptable to mark confidential?

RESPONSE

On a separate page(s) at the front of the technical proposal boldly marked "Confidential Material." Identify the section and provide rationale per the Attorney General PIA (Public Information Act) manual that gives guidance on the various exceptions to the PIA's disclosure requirement for public records, including exceptions for confidential commercial or financial information.

<http://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/ChapterIII.pdf>

QUESTION

On page 38, section 20 Indemnity (Hold Harmless) Clause, under B. Indemnification of Contractors, it states: "The contractor shall indemnify and hold the State of Maryland harmless for any cost, expense, loss, liability, fine or penalty of any nature or character whatsoever that the State may incur as a result of the contractor or its subcontractor(s), to comply with the terms of this agreement ...".

RESPONSE

Such changes are not within the purview of the MHCC. This request for an exception requires Office of Budget Management approval.

QUESTION

It is not clear in the RFP whether we are to complete Appendices I and K and submit with the proposal, or if those only need to be completed by the successful offeror. If we are to include them with our submittal, please advise as to where in the submittal they should be included. Can you please clarify?

RESPONSE

All appendices should be included in the technical proposal, unless identified as a part of the Financial Proposal. (Refer to Part II, Organization of the Proposal).

QUESTION

Our legal department would like to know what is meant by “Legal Action Summary” in Part II.

RESPONSE

Included is further clarification of documentation required to be submitted by vendors as a part of their technical proposals:

Bid/Proposal Affidavit (Appendix F)

References

Organization Chart

Fiscal Integrity Documentation

Legal Action Summary

Past State Experience

Economic Benefit to the State

The offeror shall provide **Documentation of Fiscal Integrity** as specified by, but not limited to, the following:

1. Recently audited (or best available) financial statements
2. Successful financial track record
3. Adequate working capital
4. Lines of credit

The offeror shall provide a **Legal Action Summary** that includes:

1. A statement as to whether there are any outstanding legal actions or potential claims against the offeror and a brief description of any such action;
2. A brief description of any settled or closed legal actions or claims against the offeror over the past five years;
3. A description of any judgments against the offeror within the past five years, including the case name, court number, and what the final ruling or determination was from the court; and
4. The name of the judge and location of the court for any instances where litigation is ongoing and the offeror has been directed not to disclose information by the court.

As part of its proposal, each offeror shall provide a list of all contracts with any entity of the State of Maryland that it is currently performing or which have been completed within the last five years. For each identified contract the offeror is to provide:

1. The State contracting entity;
2. A brief description of the services/goods provided;
3. The dollar value of the contract
4. The term of the contract;
5. The State employee contact person (name, title, telephone number, and if possible, e-mail address); and
6. A synopsis of why contract terminated before the end of the term specified in the original contract, including whether any available renewal option was not exercised.

Economic Benefit to the State of Maryland

In this section, the offeror shall describe the benefits that will accrue to the Maryland economy as a direct or indirect result of offeror's performance of the contract resulting from this RFP. **Do not divulge your financial proposal when describing economic benefit. Use percentages or other descriptive language in responding to items listed below.** Proposals will be evaluated to assess the benefit to Maryland's economy specifically offered.

Economic benefits include:

- The percent of total contract dollars to be recycled into Maryland's economy in support of the contract through the use of Maryland subcontractors, suppliers and joint venture partners. Offerors should be as specific as possible without divulging their bid amount and provide a breakdown of expenditures in this category.
- The number and types of jobs for Maryland residents resulting from the contract. Indicate job classifications, number of employees in each classification and the aggregate payroll to which the contractor has committed at both prime and, if applicable, subcontract levels.
- Tax revenues to be generated for Maryland and its political subdivisions as a result of the contract. Indicate tax category (sales taxes, payroll taxes, inventory taxes, and estimated personal income taxes for new employees). Provide a forecast of the total tax revenues resulting from the contract.
- Subcontract dollars committed to Maryland small business and MBEs.
- In addition to items listed above, the offeror should explain any other economic benefits to the State of Maryland that would result from the offeror's proposal.

QUESTION

The requirements for this project are written for a traditional/waterfall guidelines. The work plan for this project will naturally be a more traditional work plan. Deliverables will be broken down to distinct phases (analysis, design, development, QA, deployment) and the project moves from one phase to another.

Are we allowed to propose a more agile approach to this project? Can we Work with the subject matter experts (SMEs) from your team to break the project into smaller chunks/ sprints (2 – 4 weeks each)? We can then deliver each sprint with complete and deployable code (code that is tested and certified through UAT and could be deployed to production).

This approach will allow us to make sure we deliver a right solution to the correct business problem. Your team will be engaged from the beginning. We will be able to cut down on the training time and we will reduce the learning curve for your developers since the deliverables from each sprint are readily available for review and evaluation.

Agile approach will have a number of advantages over the more traditional project approach. However, it will require dedicated resources from your team. SMEs from your team will be involved in developing the backlog of the features needed for the website. They will also need to be available for any review and feedback sessions. Because each sprint will produce deployable code, the deliverable from each sprint must be accepted through formal UAT.

RESPONSE

The MHCC does not plan to modify the major deliverables in the RFP. A vendor is not required to use traditional software development lifecycle in producing the application. MHCC believes that the schedule of deliverables will support different software development methodologies including structured analysis, but also a rapid application development approach.

Issued by:

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Procurement Officer

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